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Comparing the Effects of Chinese and Traditional Official Finance on State Repression in Africa

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Redressing biases in extant literature linking Chinese official finance and state repression, this article employs standard multiple regression analysis to comparatively assess the effects of different attributes of Chinese and traditional official finance on variations in rates of repression across Africa over the period of 2001-2018. Statistical outputs reveal more similarities than differences in the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on repression. To prevent diversionary use of foreign official finance on repression, reforms towards specification of purposes of inflows in recipient African states are recommended.

Keywords foreign official finance, aid, China, loans, grants, repression

Introduction

Several peace studies have explored the effects of foreign aid on civil wars but not on repressive use of state force against unarmed civilians. Only a few studies, notably Ahmed (2016, 2019), Carter (2016), and Kishi and Raleigh (2017), have quantitatively assessed the effects of foreign aid—whether defined narrowly as official development assistance with grant elements of at least 25 percent or broadly to include other official flows which either are not primarily aimed at development or have grant elements of less than 25 percent—on repressive use of state force against unarmed civilians. The current quantitative literature on foreign aid and repression asserts a negative relationship between conditional Western official finance and state repression (Carter 2016) on the one hand, and a positive association between unconditional Chinese official finance and repression (Kishi and Raleigh 2017) on the other.

But I find Kishi and Raleigh's (2017) study linking Chinese official finance and repression to be undermined by major sources of theoretical and methodol-

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ogical bias as elaborated in the literature review section of this article. Kishi and Raleigh's theoretical framework overemphasizes repression as a tool for consolidating political power while overlooking political survival theory's (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003) more fundamental focus on provision of public goods as the main mechanism used to enhance political longevity. Understating the role providing public goods plays in power consolidation is problematic as the use of unconditional Chinese official finance in providing public goods potentially minimizes public grievances, protests, and opportunities for use of repressive force. Also, Kishi and Raleigh's exclusion of post-2013 Chinese official finance flows from their study constitutes a major source of bias. The exclusion is significant because without including post-2013 data, their findings potentially overstate the repressive side effects of Chinese official finance as Beijing instituted in 2013 and 2014 some aid reform "guidelines" which, as highlighted in the literature review section, potentially induce disincentives for using Chinese official finance on unintended purposes, such as repression.

Redressing the gaps in the literature linking Chinese aid and repression, this article re-assesses through standard multiple regression analysis the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance flow amounts, flow types, and flow allocation status on repression in African states using both the AidData (2000-2013) used by Kishi and Raleigh and a more temporally extensive, albeit substantially limited, data on Chinese loans to African governments (2000-2017) assembled by Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies' China-Africa Research Initiative (SAIS-CARI).

Data on instances of repression are extracted from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project (Raleigh et al. 2010) and are aggregated by country-year from 2001 to 2018. Official finance variables are lagged (2000-2017) to ensure independence in observations of finance inflows on the one hand and repression events on the other. Upon incorporating a number of standard control variables (including respect for civil liberties) in standard multiple regression models, the study offers the following two findings.

First, foreign official finance, whether Chinese or traditional, regardless of its flow amount, flow type, and flow allocation attributes, makes a very marginal contribution towards explaining variations in repression in Africa, relative to standard realist and liberal predictors of repression such as military capacity and civil liberties record.

Second, there are more similarities than differences in the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance flow attributes on repression, with neither type of finance being exclusively associated with repression. In terms of flow amounts, both types of finance have positive associations with repression, but while only the effect of Chinese official finance is statistically significant in the 2000-2013 period in conformity with Kishi and Raleigh's Chinese aid-repression linkage, this study does not find a similar distinct statistically significant linkage when using

SAIS-CARI data and incorporating the post-2013 period, which is characterized by notable reforms to China's official aid policy. Regarding flow types, while grants under both Chinese and traditional finance have negative associations with repression, loans are positively associated with repression. While the effect of Chinese loans is distinctly statistically significant over the 2000-2013 period, it is not when the analysis covers the post-2013 period.

Flow allocation status seems to be the only aspect where directional differences are apparent in the effects of Chinese and non-Chinese aid on repression. While Chinese funds without allocated purposes have a negative and statistically insignificant effect on repression, unallocated traditional flows have a positive and statistically significant effect on repression. Thus, to minimize risks of repressive use of aid in African states, traditional aid policies ought to ensure that the purposes of all official finance flows are comprehensively elaborated. As growing reforms of China's official finance structure render it more conditional as Western aid, the observed statistically significant positive linkage between unallocated traditional finance and repression is instructive for prescribing that Chinese aid reforms are accompanied by specifications in the purposes of all finance flows to African regimes.

The remainder of this article proceeds in a number of stages. First, I clarify the operational definition of foreign aid or foreign official finance as used in this article. Second, extant literature relating to the linkage between Chinese official finance and repression is reviewed. From the review, logical expectations regarding the repressive effects of different attributes of Chinese official finance (flow amounts, flow types, and flow allocation status), relative to traditional official finance, are framed theoretically and stated as testable hypotheses. Third, the article presents data and variables on state repression (dependent variable), foreign official finance (independent variable), and other explanatory variables including conventional realist and liberal control variables in peace studies.

Next, upon subjecting the described data to standard multiple regression analysis through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, statistical outputs are reported and discussed. The final section of the article highlights policy recommendations whilst concluding the article. Among the policy recommendations, this study prescribes incorporating civil society organizations in Chinese aid allocation and aid delivery processes for purposes of maximizing aid effectiveness and minimizing diversionary misuse on repression. Although the role and potential of civil society organizations in extracting vertical accountability in the management of foreign official finance is not explored, an abundance of case studies in a United Nations Development Programme study (Tomlinson 2013) provide a basis for expecting that misuse of aid can be curbed through active engagement of civil society organizations in aid allocation and aid delivery processes.

Operational Definition of Foreign Official Finance

In this study, "foreign aid" and "foreign official finance" are used interchangeably. While development studies typically adopt a narrow and strict definition of foreign aid as provided by the conventionally dominant aid regime that is organized around the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), this study adopts a much broader definition for purposes of consistency with the broader meaning of aid used in Kishi and Raleigh (2017) and AidData. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC)—the OECD committee that deals with development cooperation matters—defines foreign aid strictly as official development assistance (ODA) flows with a grant element of at least 25 percent undertaken by the official sector, with a primary objective of promoting economic development and welfare in receiving countries. Transactions by the official sector which do not meet the conditions for eligibility as ODA, "either because they are not primarily aimed at development or because they have a grant element of less than 25 percent" are categorized by DAC as other official flows (OOF).

Given that this study reassesses the linkage made between Chinese aid and repression in Kishi and Raleigh (2017) and given that the aid dataset (Strange et al. 2015) used by Kishi and Raleigh operationalizes aid or foreign official finance as a combination ODA, OOF, and vague official flows (flows without sufficient information to be termed either ODA or OOF), this article adopts a similar broad definition of foreign official finance to facilitate comparative analysis of the findings. As with the Kishi and Raleigh (2017) study, foreign official finance to Africa in this study is categorized into: Chinese official finance—that is, the known universe of projects in Africa officially financed by China as captured in AidData's Chinese Official Finance to Africa Dataset, version 1.2 (Strange et al. 2015); and traditional (non-Chinese) official finance—that is, known projects in Africa officially financed from non-Chinese sources, specifically OECD sources, as captured in AidData's Core Research Release, version 3.1 (Tierney et al. 2011).

OECD data does not comprehensively capture non-Chinese sources of official finance to Africa and does not incorporate data on Chinese official finance. This makes it impossible to use OECD data for comparative quantitative analysis of the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on repression. Conversely, AidData contains data on both Chinese and traditional official finance, facilitating comparative analysis from a common data source. While Chinese official finance is structurally different from traditional OECD aid, AidData has researched, tracked, and assembled data on Chinese official finance using the ODA-like and OOF-like categorizations of OECD-DAC (Strange et al. 2015). Consistent with extant quantitative comparative studies of the effects of traditional and Chinese aid on repression (Kishi and Raleigh 2017) and armed conflict (Strange et al. 2015), this study uses AidData which allows for comparability of Chinese and traditional official finance.

Literature Review

China has risen to become one of Africa's largest external official finance providers, with almost every African state receiving Chinese concessional and non-concessional flows almost every year since the turn of the twenty-first century. Chinese finance is typically oblivious to civil liberties and the democratic accountability profiles of recipient states due to its "non-interference policy." As affirmed in a recent study by Broich (2017), Chinese aid flows to different types of states, whether autocratic or democratic. China's "non-interference policy" makes Chinese official finance distinct from traditional official finance in terms of constraints accompanying, and potential consequences of, external development finance assistance to Africa. While there is an abundance of studies on the effects of traditional Western finance on development (e.g. Cohen 1995; Wright 2010) and peace (e.g. Grossman 1992; De Ree and Nillesen 2009; Carter 2016; Kishi, Maggio, and Raleigh 2017) in Africa, there is a dearth of literature on the effects of Chinese official finance due, at least in part, to the relatively more recent emergence of (and scarcity of reliable data on) Chinese official finance as a major source of external financial assistance to Africa.

The relatively fewer studies on the effects of Chinese official finance in Africa focus on the impact of Chinese finance flows on development and disagree on its effectiveness: some reveal that Chinese development finance is more easily accessible and allows for "local ownership" of development projects, and project monitoring and evaluation processes, with African states having less constrained discretion in using inflows to redress poverty and enhance development (e.g. Brautigam 2009; Mwase and Yang 2012; Chen and Landry 2016); others reveal that the "no-strings-attached" structure of Chinese finance incentivizes political survival-seeking African leaders to invest inflows in corruption (e.g. Isaksson and Kotsadam 2016), prestige, personal, and parochial projects (e.g. Tull 2006; Dreher et al. 2016), making Chinese official finance ineffective.

More prominent is the scarcity of studies on the effects of Chinese aid on peace and security in Africa (Strange et al. 2015, 935). While China's "non-interference policy" presupposes that Chinese official finance, relative to conditional traditional finance, might be more fungible and predisposed to induce state capture and state securitization violence by rebel groups and state forces, extant studies, notably Strange et al. (2015), and Kishi and Raleigh (2017), do not find evidence that Chinese official financial assistance is distinctly associated with armed conflicts. Instead, the unconditional nature of Chinese finance facilitates access to additional resources for boosting the security apparatus of African states thereby promoting peace by increasing the opportunity costs of mounting armed challenges to African states (Strange et al. 2015).

However, twenty-first century peace studies suggest that armed conflicts and armed violence against the state are decreasing whereas unarmed or non-militia challenges to the state, including from elites within the formal government, are increasing in Africa and globally (Raleigh et al. 2010). One recent study by Kishi and Raleigh (2017), upon noting a decline in externally-based rebel challenges to African state leaders and a surge in domestic civilian and non-militia challengers, comparatively explored the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on variations in African states' use of repression in response to domestic opposition, including through civilian targeting. Kishi and Raleigh (2017, 3) remarkably found that "states in receipt of higher rates of unconditional, Chinese official finance actively engage in more violence against their citizens relative to states with more conditional, 'traditional' official finance profiles." Critically, however, while Kishi and Raleigh's projection of a distinct statistically significant positive correlation between Chinese aid and state repression has been extensively publicized in influential international media outlets including *Mail and Guardian* (2015), *The Irish Times* (Corcoran 2015), and *The Washington Post* (Kishi and Raleigh 2015), it is undermined by four major sources of theoretical and methodological bias.

First, Kishi and Raleigh's theoretical framework linking Chinese aid and repression appears to be narrowly rooted on one strand of political survival theory emphasising repression as an instrument for consolidating political power by state leaders (Heger and Salehyan 2007). While the primary objective of politicians, according to political survival theory, is to achieve and keep political power, a core strand of the theory accentuates the provision of "public goods" (e.g. tarred roads, electricity, and hospitals among others) as the main mechanism for enhancing the legitimacy and political longevity of state leaders (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). The latter more fundamental strand of political survival theory overlooked in Kishi and Raleigh's theoretical framework suggests that state leaders are just as, if not more, inclined to use Chinese official finance on public welfare than using it ruthlessly. Providing public goods forestalls and reduces grievances and demonstrations against state leaders whilst curbing incentives and opportunities for repression by state leaders. By sidelining the logic linking political survival to public goods performance, Kishi and Raleigh ostensibly understate the repression-averting effects of power consolidation considerations during usage of unconditional Chinese official aid.

Although this may be due to AidData's coverage which only takes into account data from 2000 to 2013, Kishi and Raleigh's second bias lies in the exclusion of post-2013 Chinese finance flows from their study. China has in recent years—following criticisms in scholarly and policy circles of its unconditional finance structure's dismal regard for debt sustainability, labor rights, and social and environmental safeguards—instituted some guidelines and "measures" requiring greater stringency in the use of development project finance, especially through meticulous project appraisals, supervisions, and evaluations. The reform "guidelines" were jointly issued by China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and the Ministry of Environmental Protection in February 2013. In 2014, MOFCOM released a new policy document entitled "Measures for the Administration of Foreign Aid" which requires Chinese enterprises to apply stricter standards in processes of aid project appraisal, supervision, and evaluation (quoted in Dreher et al. 2016, 10). Since these reforms potentially introduce at least some checks against channelling Chinese official finance to unintended purposes such as repression, the post-2013 finance exclusion bias in Kishi and Raleigh's study potentially overstates the repressive side effects of Chinese official finance.

Third, whereas (dis)regard for civil liberties is among the primary determinants of restraint from using state power repressively, Kishi and Raleigh's regression model does not control for the restraining effect of civil liberties. Regard for civil liberties serves as a primary restraint from using state power repressively. Leaders of countries that have a history or record of respect for civil liberties are usually under much pressure from large parts of the citizenry to preserve the record. Public pressure to uphold civil liberties dissuades repressive use of state security forces. Conversely, leaders of countries without a record of regard for civil liberties are not restrained from using state forces ruthlessly owing to a dearth of domestic pressure for civil liberties. Kishi and Raleigh's omission of countries' record of civil liberties as a control variable ostensibly exaggerates the evidence that supports the linkage between Chinese official aid and repression.

While Kishi and Raleigh emphasize a difference in the effects of Chinese and traditional aid on state repression, the above review highlighting biases in the scholars' thesis provides some grounds for the counter hypothesis: *states receiving more Chinese official finance are no more likely to engage in repressive acts than states receiving more traditional official finance*.

Fourth, Kishi and Raleigh's regression model narrowly assesses only the effect of aggregated annual flow amounts to African states without considering if different flow types (ways in which aid reaches the recipient country) and flow allocation status (degree of specification of purpose of finance flows) affect the repressive behaviour of states receiving predominantly Chinese official finance as opposed to states receiving predominantly non-Chinese official finance. Exclusive focus on aggregated flow amounts overlooking other flow attributes is problematic at both the empirical and policy levels. Empirically, it misses any influence or constraints that aid flows with grant elements (relative to those without grant elements) and purpose-allocated flows (relative to unallocated flows) might bear on incentives to invest foreign official finance on personal, prestige, and patronage projects and securitize those benefits through repression.

At the policy level, instituting regulatory checks against the provision of Chinese official finance simply "on demand" irrespective of civil liberty records and institutional qualities of demanding African states might be limited in effectiveness for curbing repression if different flow types and flow allocation status affect state repression proclivity differently. Oversight measures regulating these flow attributes might be required to minimize repressive misuse of inflows and optimize the effectiveness of Chinese official aid for the development of Africa.

There are different ways in which foreign grants might affect a state leader's proclivity to repress. One line of thought specifically relating to grants from the United States—one of the largest donors in the world—holds that US grants are explicitly tied to respect for human rights in receiving countries. Because US grants increase the opportunity costs of human rights violations, receiving states are inclined to act less repressively (e.g. Gibler 2008). A different line of thought argues that US grants undermine the social contract thereby reducing incentives for accountability in the use force (e.g. Ahmed 2016). Since grants usually come in small amounts and are usually for development purposes with no repayment conditions attached, it can be expected that foreign grants will generally be negatively associated with repression. As African states are constantly seeking ways of boosting their budgets to facilitate development projects, grants designated for development purposes are less, not more, likely to be used on repression.

Loans, constituting the majority of foreign official finance inflows to Africa, usually come in more substantial amounts (relative to grants) and, regardless of their purposes, are usually expected to be repaid. The repayment condition in itself imposes pressure for productive use of inflows on public goods, regardless of the foreign source of funds. By implication, foreign loans generally should be negatively associated with repression. But traditional loans are accompanied by more stringent accountability conditions relative to Chinese loans, pointing to a stronger negative relationship between traditional loans and repression. This logic, however, is undermined by the fact that foreign loan inflows are often accompanied by foreign companies that are contracted to execute projects requiring sophisticated engineering and technological skills which are scarce in Africa.

The presence of foreign companies and foreign labor on projects funded by foreign loans potentially introduces risks of cultural and social tensions in relations between the foreigners and hosting communities in Africa, as was the case with local labor protests against foreign contractors on some hydropower projects in Cameroon (Chen and Landry 2016, 15-16). Admittedly, the experience of local grievances, tensions, and protests against development aid projects tied to foreign companies and foreign labor is not the same for all African countries (Tang 2016).

However, for African governments (such as the government in Cameroon) relying heavily on foreign loans and foreign companies for the provision of political survival public goods, there is an incentive to use force against citizens resisting foreign involvement in development projects in the same way state leaders prioritize the security of foreign investors and investments over the security of citizens in African states relying on foreign direct investments (Kishi, Maggio, and Raleigh 2017). Hence it could also be hypothesized that Chinese and traditional loans (as opposed to grants) are positively linked with repression. Perhaps, as a function of China's "go out" or "going global" policy supporting Chinese companies' efforts to expand operations internationally, Chinese enterprises are usually tied to Chinese loans and tend to outcompete other companies to win contracts on even Western funded projects.

While statistical analysis in this study evaluates the hypothesis of variation in the repressive effects of foreign aid in terms of grants versus loans, the study does not specifically test for differences in the repressive effects of aid that is "tied" to foreign companies and foreign labor, relative to "untied" aid. Most existing datasets on foreign official finance to Africa typically capture data in terms of levels of concessionality or grant elements to aid inflows. Though some case studies, as the one on Cameroon mentioned above, suggest a connection between tied aid and increased repression, there is no systematic and reliable dataset on tied and untied aid that allows for quantitative comparative analysis of their effects on repression.

In another direction, this study hypothesizes that, if the purposes of foreign finance are not clearly specified, such unallocated inflows can easily be directed to any purpose, including patronage, prestige, repression, and public goods. But the "supply-driven" structure of traditional official finance flows which often bypass state leaders and target poverty renders any unallocated or vaguely allocated traditional finance particularly prone to capture and repressive misuse since the majority of traditional flows are purpose-allocated with limited opportunities for diversionary capture. Conversely, as Chinese official finance flows are generally "demand-driven" by African regimes (Dreher et al. 2016, 8-11), there is a vast pool of inflows for use by state leaders, limiting the leaders' interest in unallocated inflows whilst rendering these inflows less susceptible to capture and repressive misuse.

Research Design and Data

To assess the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on repression, standard multiple regression tests are conducted through SPSS. The regression models compare the repression effects of Chinese and traditional official finance using different measures of the dependent variable. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure the absence of violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. As a high level of correlation was observed between total annual loan flows and total official finance flows—perhaps owing to most foreign official finance coming to Africa as loans—thereby violating the assumption on multicollinearity, the study ran separate regression models for loans and for total finance flows.

In the regression models, Chinese and traditional official finance total flow amounts/total loans, grants, and purpose-unspecified flows were joined by standard repression-predictor variables, namely civil liberties, military capacity, demonstrations, gross domestic product (GDP), armed conflicts, and political corruption. Analyses were conducted at the country-year level, with a total of 889 African country-year units identified. The 889 units of analysis cover all African states with membership in the United Nations except four—Gambia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Burkina Faso, and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland)—which until recently were deliberately excluded from the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and did not receive Chinese aid because their diplomatic relations with Taiwan violated a prerequisite for Chinese aid, namely recognition of the "One China" principle which asserts Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. In 2016, Gambia and São Tomé and Príncipe severed relations with Taiwan and resumed relations with China and Burkina Faso followed suit in 2018, leaving Eswatini as the only African state without financial ties with China (Solomon 2018).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable repression relates to use of force by a state's armed agencies for purposes of obstructing popular participation in the country's political affairs. Examples of repressive acts include, but are not limited to, torture, forced displacements, extrajudicial arrests, detentions, and executions. Repression could target specific civilians, including political activists and dissidents. It could also target groups of protesters and rioters. Data on repression is gauged from ACLED (Raleigh et al. 2010) and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project. Employing diverse local, national, and regional sources, as well as trained experts worldwide, ACLED tracks violent and non-violent events by political agents including governments, rebels, political parties, protesters, rioters, and civilians. ACLED data captures the specific dates and geographical locations of the violent and non-violent events as well as the actors involved (interaction type) from 1997 into the present.

In this study, four measures of repression are adopted from ACLED's varying interaction codes for differentiating events based on actors involved. All the measures are continuous in nature, involving country-year (from 2001-2018) occurrence counts of events involving use of state military force against civilians and groups of demonstrators. An aggregate measure is used involving counts of events in which state security agencies used force against civilians (civilian targeting, e.g. via arrests), protesters (military versus protesters), and rioters (military versus rioters). Counts of events relating to each of the three listed constituent elements of the aggregate measure are also undertaken as disaggregated measures of repression. A fifth measure of repression is generated from V-Dem's Physical Violence Index, version 8 (Coppedge et al. 2018) which captures, on a scale of 0-1, the degree to which citizens are safe from physical torture by state forces. To gauge repression from V-Dem in a manner consistent with ACLED-based measures—with higher scores reflecting higher levels of repression—this study reverses V-Dem's physical violence index to construct a repressive violence index by subtracting each physical violence index score from 1.

Predictor Variables

Chinese official finance is often tied to Chinese state-owned enterprises and recipient state resources. Accordingly, Chinese official finance flows do not neatly align with traditional OECD-DAC categorizations of official finance, namely ODA and OOF. But AidData has contributed towards facilitating comparative analyses of Chinese and non-Chinese official finance by assembling data on Chinese official finance in alignment with the OECD-DAC categories (Strange et al. 2015). AidData's Chinese Official Finance to Africa Dataset, version 1.2 (2000-2013) (Strange et al. 2015) provides data on "ODA-like" flows, "OOF-like" flows, and vague official finance flows. The three categories are combined to obtain total Chinese official finance annually from 2000 to 2017. Pledges and cancelled or suspended projects are excluded from calculations.

While repression events are observed from 2001 to 2018, observations of foreign official finance flows are lagged (2000 to 2017) to control for direction of effect. Chinese official finance flows are further disaggregated by the total amount of finance flowing to African states annually as grants or as loans. Data on Chinese loans to African governments are extracted from AidData (2000-2013) and SAIS-CARI's (Atkins et al. 2017) more specialized and temporally extensive loan data (2000-2017). Aggregated annual Chinese official flow amounts with unspecified purposes are also captured to assess the effect of allocation status on repression. Equivalents of the Chinese official finance variables under traditional official finance are gauged from AidData's Core Research Release, version 3.1 (2000-2013) (Tierney et al. 2011). As SAIS-CARI loan data does not capture any grants and does not capture loans from traditional sources, regression models using SAIS-CARI data and covering the period 2001 to 2018 focus solely on Chinese loans, with Chinese ODA-like loans (*TOTODALOAN*) used as rough substitutes for Chinese grants since ODA flows consist of grants or loans with at least some (25 percent) grant element.

Foreign finance variables are joined by a number of standard predictor variables as outlined in Table 1. First, because governments with high regards for civil liberties, including freedom of speech, movement, and political association,

Table 1. List of Variables in Multiple Regression Analysis and Data Details

Variable	Description	Data Source(s)	Coverage
Chinese Official Finance	Total amount of Chinese official finance received by a given state in a given year. Amounts exclude pledges and covers Official Development Assistance (ODA-like), Other Official Flows (OOF-like), and "vague" official finance	AidData's Chinese Official Finance to Africa Dataset, version 1.2 (Strange et al. 2015)	2000-2013
Traditional Official Finance	Total amount of non-Chinese official finance received by a given state in a given year	AidData's Core Research Release, version 3.1 (Tierney et al. 2011)	2000-2013
Chinese Loans	Total amount of Chinese loans received by a given state in a given year	AidData (Strange et al. 2015)	2000-2013
		Johns Hopkins SAIS-CARI's Chinese Loans to African Governments dataset, version 1.1 (Atkins et al. 2017)	2000-2017
Chinese ODA Loans	Total amount of Chinese ODA-like loans received by a given state in a given year	SAIS-CARI loan data (Atkins et al. 2017)	2000-2017
Traditional Loans	Total amount of non-Chinese loans received by a given state in a given year	AidData (Tierney et al. 2011)	2000-2013
Chinese Grants	Total amount of Chinese grants received by a given state in a given year	AidData (Strange et al. 2015)	2000-2013
Traditional Grants	Total amount of non-Chinese grants received by a given state in a given year	AidData (Tierney et al. 2011)	2000-2013
Unallocated Chinese Finance	Total amount of purpose-unspecified or sector-unallocated Chinese official finance received by a given state in a given year	AidData's Chinese Official Finance to Africa Dataset, version 1.2 (Strange et al. 2015)	2000-2013
Unallocated Chinese Loans	Total amount of purpose-unspecified or sector-unallocated Chinese loans received by a given state in a given year	SAIS-CARI loan data (Atkins et al. 2017)	2000-2017
Unallocated Traditional Finance	Total amount of purpose-unspecified or sector-unallocated non-Chinese loans received by a given state in a given year	AidData (Tierney et al. 2011)	2000-2013
Civil Liberties	Index capturing a government's level of respect for civil liberties in terms of absence of government constraints on private and political liberties	V-Dem Civil Liberties Index, version 8 (Coppedge et al. 2018)	2001-2017

Table 1. (continued)

Variable	Description	Data Source(s)	Coverage
Political Corruption	Index capturing pervasiveness of political corruption, especially in terms of political leaders' ability to "capture" the state and its resources, including foreign finance	V-Dem Political Corruption Index, version 8 (Coppedge et al. 2018)	2001-2017
Armed Conflicts	Number of dyadic armed conflicts involving a given state in a given year	UCDP Dyadic Dataset, version 19.1 (Pettersson, Högbladh, and Öberg 2019)	2001-2018
GDP	Gross domestic product of a given state in a given year (in current USD)	World Bank 2018	2000-2017
National Military Capability	Index capturing a given state's national military capacity in a given year based on various indicators including military personnel size and military expenditures	COW National Material Capabilities Data, version 5.0 (Greig and Enterline 2017)	2001-2012
Demonstrations	Aggregate number of instances of anti-government public protests and riots that occurred in a given state in a given year	ACLED Data, version 8 (Raleigh et al. 2010)	2001-2018
Aggregate Repression	Aggregate number of instances of violence by state security forces against protests/protesters, riots/rioters, and civilians in a given state in a given year	ACLED (Raleigh et al. 2010)	2001-2018
	Index denoting the degree of disregard for a person's physical integrity in a given state in a given year	V-Dem Physical Violence Index, version 8 (Coppedge et al. 2018)	2001-2017
Repression of Protests	Number of instances of violence by state security forces against protests/protesters in a given state in a given year	ACLED (Raleigh et al. 2010)	2001-2018
Repression of Riots	Number of instances of violence by state security forces against riots/rioters in a given state in a given year	ACLED (Raleigh et al. 2010)	2001-2018
Repression of Civilians	Number of instances of violence by state security forces against civilians, including "targeting" of unarmed government challengers through torture, arrests, abduction, rape, torture, and forced disappearance	ACLED (Raleigh et al. 2010)	2001-2018

are inclined to tolerate rather than repress political activists, standard multiple regression models in this study control for the repression-averting effect of respect for civil liberties. Values for civil liberties are derived from V-Dem's Civil Liberties Index, version 8 (Coppedge et al. 2018). Since liberal democracies, according to the logic of the democratic peace theory, are less prone to use force against its adversaries, liberal democracy, measured from the Polity IV index (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2018) was incorporated in initial regression models.

However, the liberal democracy control variable was subsequently dropped from regression analysis due to a high level of correlation with civil liberties, which violated the assumption on multicollinearity in multiple regression analysis. Second, because public demonstrations, especially anti-government demonstrations, potentially pose security challenges and increase opportunities for repressive violence against civilians, this study's regression models incorporate controls for the positive linkage between demonstrations and repression. Event counts of demonstrations at the country-year level are extracted from ACLED and constitute counts of protests and riots.

Third, since political corruption—relating to capture and diversionary use of state resources and foreign aid by state officials for personal, prestige, and patronage political projects—potentially induces incentives for state officials to use repression to shield personal benefits (Kishi, Maggio, and Raleigh 2017), this study controls for political corruption. Political corruption is gauged from V-Dem's Political Corruption Index, version 8 (Coppedge et al. 2018). In another vein, since involvement in armed conflicts potentially increases a state's alertness as well as its incentives and opportunities to react ruthlessly to unarmed challengers, including anti-government protesters, controls for the positive effect of state-involved armed conflicts on repression are added to the regression models in this study. Counts of armed conflicts involving each state are derived from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) dyadic dataset, version 19.1 (Pettersson, Högbladh, and Öberg 2019).

Additionally, regression models in this study incorporate GDP as a control variable. GDP in this study, as measured from the World Bank's (2018) World Development Indicators, captures the performance of a country's economy in terms of the total market value of all goods and services produced in a given year. As with foreign official finance flow variables, GDP values are lagged (2000-2017) to ensure independence in observations between the control variable and repression events. There are two opposing logical expectations regarding the directional effect of GDP on repression. On the one hand, there is the negative correlational view that better performing economies with higher GDP values have the capacity to provide wider pools of public goods and services such as roads, hospitals, and education, which potentially mitigate anti-government grievances while curbing risks of demonstrations and repression. On the other hand, there is the less plausible positive correlational view that higher GDP performance induces greater spending on the coercive apparatus of the state, thereby increasing risks of repressive use of state forces. Furthermore, because capacity to repress is a potential determinant of actual repression, this study controls for national material (including military) capacities of states using the Correlates of War (COW) project's National Material Capabilities index, version 5.0 (Greig and Enterline 2017).

Results and Discussion

Outputs of the standard multiple regression analysis of the effect of foreign official finance on state repression are reported in Tables 2 to 4. All the regression models in the study are statistically significant and explain substantial amounts of variations in rates of repression as evinced by the *R* square values beneath each table. Comparing the standardized values for size of effect of each variable in each regression model, Chinese and traditional official finance variables generally appear to be making the least contribution to explaining variations in the dependent variable, relative to standard repression predictor variables. Comparing the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on rates of

Table 2. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the Effects of Chinese and Traditional Official Finance (AidData) on Repression (ACLED), 2000-2013

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Chinese Official Finance	.068**		.124***	
Traditional Official Finance		.039		.013
Chinese Grants	-.023		-.037	
Traditional Grants		-.024		.001
Unallocated Chinese Finance	-.009		-.012	
Unallocated Traditional Finance		.058**		.084**
Demonstrations	.875***	.864***	.378***	.365***
Civil Liberties	-.162***	-.166***	-.271***	-.275***
Political Corruption	.044	.048	.044	.049
Armed Conflicts	.130***	.134***	.200***	.204***
GDP	-.320***	-.323***	-.234***	-.231***
National Military Capability	.146***	.148***	.047	.056

***$p<0.01$, **$p<0.05$, *$p<0.1$

Model 1: R Square = .633, $p<0.001$. Model 2: R Square = .633, $p<0.001$. Model 3: R Square = .264, $p<0.001$. Model 4: R Square = .257, $p<0.001$

Table 3. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the Effects of Chinese and Traditional Loans (AidData) on Repression (ACLED), 2000-2013

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Chinese Loans	.074***		.138***	
Traditional Loans		.041		.005
Chinese Grants	-.015		-.021	
Traditional Grants		-.009		.006
Unallocated Chinese Finance	-.012		-.017	
Unallocated Traditional Finance		.057**		.084**
Demonstrations	.876***	.865***	.380***	.365***
Civil Liberties	-.161***	-.165***	-.269***	-.274***
Political Corruption	.044	.049	.044	.049
Armed Conflicts	.130***	.136***	.200***	.204***
GDP	-.320***	-.328***	-.236***	-.230***
National Military Capability	.144***	.151***	.042	.059

***$p<0.01$, **$p<0.05$, *$p<0.1$
Model 5: R Square = .634, $p<0.001$. Model 6: R Square = .634, $p<0.001$. Model 7: R Square = .267, $p<0.001$. Model 8: R Square = .257, $p<0.001$

repression, this study finds more similarities than differences in the directions of effects of both finance types on repression, with states receiving more Chinese official finance not being more likely to engage in repressive acts than states receiving more traditional official finance.

Table 2 reports the effects of Chinese official finance on aggregate repression (Model 1) and civilian targeting (Model 3) compared to the effects of traditional official finance on aggregate repression (Model 2) and civilian targeting (Model 4) over the period 2000-2013 using AidData and ACLED. The directions of effect of total Chinese and traditional finance flows are both positive and the directions of effect of Chinese grants and traditional grants are both negative. The positive association between aggregate Chinese official finance and the two reported measures of state repression is distinctly statistically significant and consistent with Kishi and Raleigh's (2017) finding of a distinct statistically significant positive correlation between Chinese finance and repression. As loans makeup the majority of foreign official finance flows to Africa, similar patterns are noticed in Table 3 reporting the effects of Chinese loans on aggregate repression (Model 5) and civilian targeting (Model 7), compared to the effects of traditional loans on aggregate (Model 6) and civilian repression (Model 8), with Chinese loans having a statistically significant positive effect on repression. The statistically significant positive association between aggregate Chinese official finance and Chinese loans on the one hand and the two reported measures of repression on the other was, however, not sustained in regression models using the three other measures of repression relating to repression of protesters and rioters as gauged from ACLED and repressive violence as generated from V-Dem's Physical Violence Index.

However, as reported in Table 4, when SAIS-CARI's loan data is used to incorporate recent years in the analysis of the effect of Chinese loans on aggregate repression (Model 9), repression of civilians (Model 10), repression of protesters (Model 11), repression of rioters (Model 12) as gauged from ACLED and repressive violence as generated from V-Dem's physical violence index (Model 13), this study does not find a statistically significant association between Chinese loans and any measure of repression.

As noted earlier in the literature review section, Beijing introduced some "measures" (quoted in Dreher et al. 2016, 10) in 2013 and 2014 requiring unprecedented levels of stringency in the administration of development project finance and necessitating more stringent project appraisals, supervisions, and evaluations. In a press conference held on December 10, 2014 by China's Ministry of Commerce to publicize the Chinese government's aid reforms titled Measures for Administration of Foreign Aid, then-Assistant Minister of Commerce Zhang Xiangchen clarified that: "the Measures is a reform document…. We have shifted the focus of administration to macropolicy study, building of laws and regulations and approval and evaluation of projects, especially strengthening the national policy management and mid- and long-term planning of foreign aid." He

Table 4. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting the Effects of Chinese Loans (SAIS-CARI) on Repression (ACLED and V-Dem), 2000-2017

	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13
Chinese Loans	.000	-.022	.041	.002	.003
Chinese ODA Loans	.037	.057	.012	.011	.006
Unallocated Chinese Loans	.014	-.002	.034	.016	-.002
Demonstrations	.872***	.370***	.764***	.993***	.083***
Civil Liberties	-.163***	-.274***	-.067*	.034	-.858***
Political Corruption	.044	.044	.028	.030	.166***
Armed Conflicts	.131***	.203***	.123***	-.035*	-.026*
GDP	-.326***	-.234***	-.373***	-.300***	-.073***
National Military Capability	.162***	.069	.226***	.238***	.023

***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1

Model 9: R Square = .631, p<0.001. Model 10: R Square = .253, p<0.001. Model 11: R Square = .453, p<0.001. Model 12: R Square = .799, p<0.001. Model 13: R Square = .889, p<0.001

continued, "and administrative and economic punishment should be given to the implementation subjects that fail to fulfil [their aid project implementation contracts] and cause harmful effects" (MOFCOM 2014). The reform measures potentially institute safeguards against the diversion of Chinese development project finance to patronage, prestige, repression, and other misuses.

The total lack of accountability associated with Chinese official finance and China's non-interference policy at the turn of the twenty-first century appears to be waning as the Chinese government embarks on what Kishi and Raleigh (2017) themselves admit is a "campaign" towards reforming China's foreign aid policy following criticisms (largely from the West) of China's unconditional aid structure. To verify if the absence of a statistically significant association between Chinese loans and repression is influenced by China's aid reform measures publicized in 2014, this study conducts additional (robustness) checks, breaking up the SAIS-CARI data into two categories: pre-2014 and post-2013 periods. While findings for the pre-2014 period are statistically insignificant, the study observes a negative relationship between Chinese loans and repression in the post-2013 period, suggesting that China's nascent aid reform measures might be reducing chances of aid misuse on repression.

But any further reforms should be approached cautiously given the benefits of unconditional Chinese aid to the people of Africa who look to their leaders for public goods provision despite limited budgets. Excessive reforms that align Chinese official finance with the West's conditional approach to foreign aid could significantly curtail development project assistance to Africa while rendering any foreign official flows with unspecified purposes prone to capture and repressive misuse as inferred from the distinct positive and statistically significant association between unallocated traditional official finance, relative to unallocated Chinese official finance, and repression (Tables 2 and 3). The statistically significant positive linkage between unallocated traditional official finance and repression is instructive for prescribing that Chinese aid reforms are accompanied by specifications in the purposes of all finance flows to African regimes.

Conclusion

Extant literature depicts Chinese official finance, relative to traditional official finance, as being distinctly associated with state repression in Africa. Upon identifying and redressing a number of gaps in the literature whilst disaggregating foreign official flows by flow amounts, grants, loans, and flow allocation status, standard multiple regression analysis in this article finds more similarities than differences in the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on state repression. Flow allocation status is found to be the only aspect along which directional differences are consistently noticed in effects of the different types of foreign official finance, with purpose-unspecified traditional official flows having a distinct positive and statistically significant effect on repression. Thus, specification of purposes of traditional official finance flows and caution against drastic reforms of China's non-interference aid policy towards producing an entirely Western-like approach are prescribed. Specification of purposes of foreign official finance flows is recommended not only for traditional aid but also Chinese aid given that the latter appears to be evolving, with nascent reforms since 2013 rendering Chinese official finance more conditional. While China has instituted some reforms to its unconditional aid structure since 2013, this article cautions against excessive reforms that could make Chinese official finance more condition-based and hurt the political utility of Chinese aid for the provision of public goods that minimize risks of anti-government protests and state repression.

While the relevance of consulting and incorporating civil society organizations in aid allocation and delivery processes for purposes of ensuring aid effectiveness is not explored in this study, a study commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (Tomlinson 2013) documents evidence from several country case studies indicating that civil society organizations play an important role in minimizing misuse of aid from traditional OECD donors. Thus, as a safeguard against capture and repressive misuse of foreign official finance flows, it is also recommended that civil society organizations should be incorporated in Chinese aid allocation and aid delivery consultations and processes.

While expanding winning coalitions in Africa imply state leaders in Africa would be inclined to use foreign official finance to provide public goods according to Bueno de Mesquita's (2003) "logic of political survival," most of the winning coalitions in Africa are ethnically aligned with state leaders' birth and co-ethnic regions, excluding other ethnics and regions. Civil society consultations during aid allocation and delivery processes could induce checks against concentrating Chinese official flows in state leaders' birth regions while averting distributional grievances, demonstrations, and risks of repression in regions outside winning coalitions. Inclusive consultations would further ensure limited inflows arising from accountability reforms are used prudently on the most propitious grievance-averting public goods which induce disincentives for anti-government protests and riots, thereby minimizing risks of state repression. As this study relied on statistical analysis to compare the effects of Chinese and traditional official finance on state repression in Africa, further robustness evaluative research involving comparative case studies of repression in countries receiving largely Chinese official finance and in those receiving predominantly (Western) traditional official finance is required.

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